



## *Preface*

This booklet was designed to acquaint the members of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and its associate units of Charleston AFB with the many accomplishments of this historic wing and to instill pride in these facts. Every member of the Air Force should be familiar with his/her unit's history, that is the intent of this booklet. Many of the facts presented in this booklet are offered for review for the first time are proven fact to the best ability of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing History Office.

In addition to the information provided in this booklet, the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing History Office contains numerous volumes on wing's events, aerospace history, photographs, and research books. The history office offers a multitude of services ranging from in-depth contemporary historical research and staff studies to unit lineage and honors information and USAF heraldry management. The history office is the office of primary responsibility for the approval of all unit emblems. For additional information or comments please contact the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing History Office located in building 245 suite 216 or call (843) 963-5635 (DSN) 673-5635 or e-mail [Dennis.Pinner@Charleston.af.mil](mailto:Dennis.Pinner@Charleston.af.mil)

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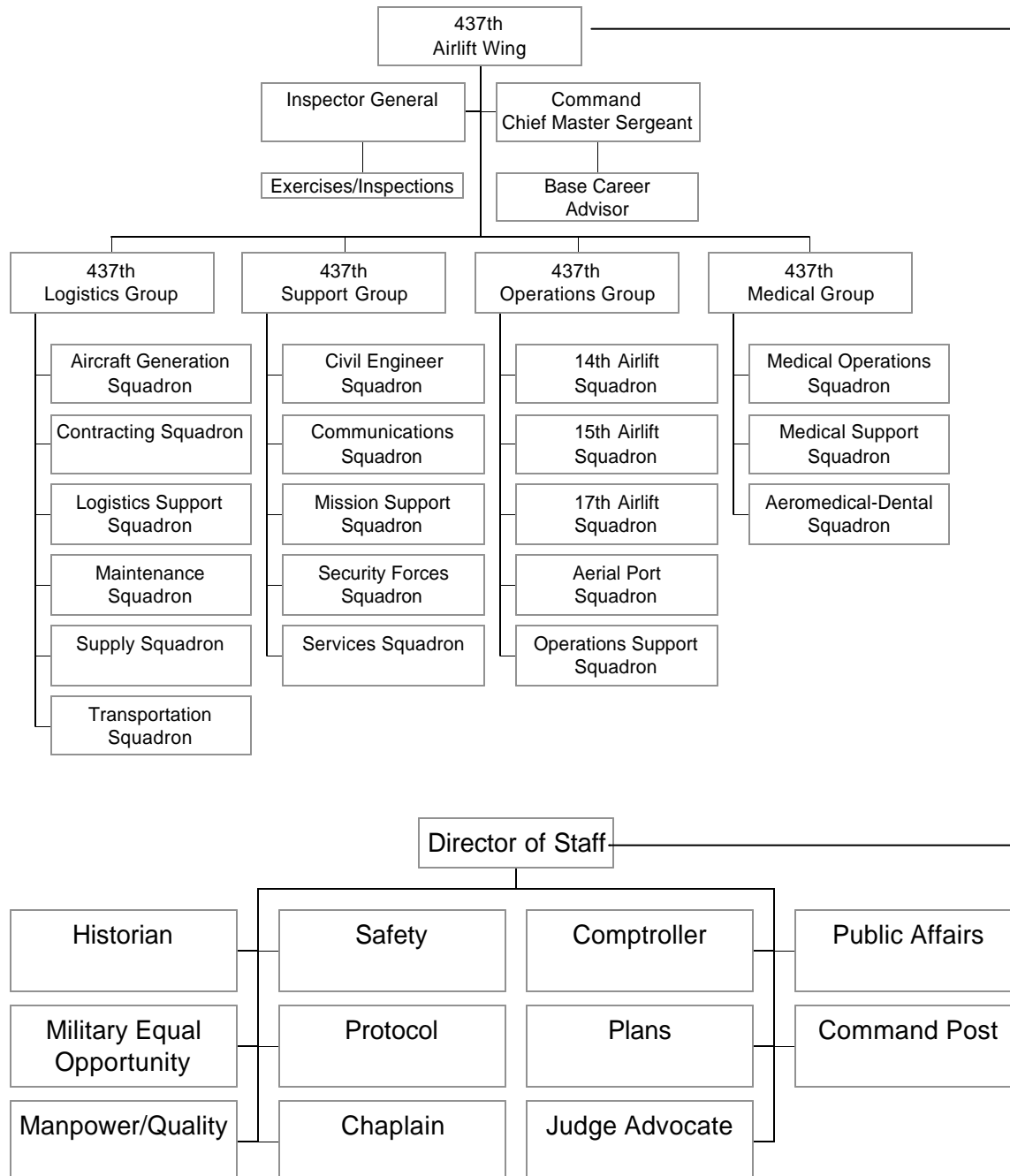
## ***Mission Statement***

*The 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing provides airlift, special air mission, and aeromedical evacuation for United States forces worldwide and to supply forces to theater commands to support Air Mobility Command's wartime tasking.*





# 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Organization





# *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Lineage and Honors*

## **Lineage**

Established as 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, on 10 May 1949. Activated in the Reserve on 27 June 1949. Ordered to active service on 10 August 1959. Inactivated on 10 June 1952. Activated in the Reserve on 15 June 1952. Inactivated on 16 November 1957. Redesignated 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing, and activated on 27 December 1965. Organized on 8 January 1966. Redesignated 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing on 1 October 1991.

## **Assignments**

Tenth Air Force, 26 June 1949; Tactical Air Command, 14 August 1950; Fifth Air Force, 8 November 1950 (attached to FEAF Combat Cargo Command, Provisional, 8 November 1950-); 314<sup>th</sup> Air Division (Combat Cargo), 25 January 1951-10 June 1952. Tenth Air Force, 15 June 1952-16 November 1957. Military Air Transport Service (later, Military Airlift Command), 27 December 1965; Twenty-First Air Force, 8 January 1966-.

## **Components**

*Group:* 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier (later, 437<sup>th</sup> Operations): 27 June 1949-10 June 1952; 15 June 1952-16 November 1957; 1 October 1991-.

## *Squadrons*

3d: 8 January 1966-1 August 1973. 17<sup>th</sup>: 8 January 1966-8 April 1969; 1 August 1987-1 October 1991. 20<sup>th</sup>: 1 August 1973-1 October 1991. 41<sup>st</sup>: 8 January 1966-1 October 1991. 76<sup>th</sup>: 8 January 1966-1 October 1991.

## **Stations**





Chicago-Orchard Arpt (later, O'Hare Intl Arpt), IL, 27 June 1949; Shaw AFB, SC, 14 August-16 October 1950; Brady Field, Japan, 8 November 1950-10 June 1952. O'Hare Intl Arpt, IL, 15 June 1952-16 November 1957. Charleston AFB, SC, 8 January 1966-.

### **Commanders**

Brig Gen John P. Henebry	27 June 1949
Col John W. Lacey	26 January 1951
Col John R. Roche	26 February 1951
Col Kenneth W. Northamer	May-10 June 1952
Col Reed G. Landis	15 June 1952
Lt Col Edwin L. Preston	1 September 1954
Col John W. Lacey	19 January 1955
Lt Col Joseph E. Whitwell	2 May-16 November 1957
Not Manned	27 December 1965-7 January 1966
Brig Gen Howard W. Kreidler	8 January 1966
Brig Gen William V. McBride	26 July 1966
Brig Gen Clare T. Ireland, Jr.,	1 March 1969
Brig Gen Thomas B. Kennedy	1 August 1970
Brig Gen Robert L. Moeller	1 April 1972
Brig Gen Thomas M. Sadler	1 February 1974
Brig Gen Tedd L. Bishop	14 March 1975
Brig Gen George B. Powers, Jr.	1 March 1978
Col Eugene D. Robinett	20 June 1979
Col Donald A. Logeais	23 June 1981
Col Paul E. Landers, Jr.	20 July 1983
Col James C. McCombs	28 June 1985
Col James F. Hinkel	11 June 1987





Col David B. Marcander	17 May 1988
Col John W. Handy	10 May 1990
Brig Gen Thomas R. Mikolajcik	25 July 1991
Brig Gen Walter S. Hogle, Jr.	June 1994
Brig Gen Gary A. Voellger	11 Aug 1995
Brig Gen Steven A. Roser	2 July 1996
Brig Gen Robert D. Bishop, Jr.	8 June 1998
Brig Gen Vern M. Findley II	20 March 2000

### **Aircraft**

T-7, 1949-1950; T-11, 1949-1952; C-46, 1949-1952; C-46, 1952-1957; C-47, 1955-1957; C-119, 1957; C-124, 1966-1969; C-130, 1966-1967; C-141, 1966-2000; C-5, 1970-1973; C-17, 1993-.

### **Honors**

***Service Streamers:*** None

***Campaign Streamers:*** Korea: CCF Intervention; First UN Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; Second Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1952.

***Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers:*** Grenada, 1983; Panama, 1989-1990.

***Decorations:*** Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards: 11 Jul 1966-10 Jul 1967; 11 Jul 1967-10 Jul 1968; 11 Jul 1968-12 Jun 1969; 13 Jun 1969-12 Jun 1970; 13 Jun 1970-30 Jun 1972; 1 Jul 1972-30 Jun 1973; 1 Jul 1982-30 Jun 1984; 1 Jul 1984-30 Jun 1986; 1 Jul 1988-30 Jun 1989; 1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1990; 21 Sep-31 Oct 1989; 1 Jul 1995-30 Jun 1997; 1 Jul 97-30 Jun 98; 1 Jul 98-30 Jun 00. Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation: 1 Jul 1951-[10 Jun 1951].

***Bestowed Honors:*** Authorized to display the streamers earned by the 437<sup>th</sup> Operations Group for the period prior to 27 June 1949.





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



***Service Streamers:*** World War II American Theater.

***Campaign Streamers:*** World War II: Rome-Arno; Normandy; Northern France; Southern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe.

***Decorations:*** Distinguished Unit Citation: France, [6-7] Jun 1944.



<sup>8</sup>  
*Team Charleston*







## *Emblem of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing*



On a yellow shield, a running "Minute Man" with rifle at high port, all in a blue silhouette, in front of a pair of wings elevated and conjoined. Approved on 24 November 1953 (KE 24511).





## *Charleston Air Force Base History*

Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, General Drum, commander of the Eastern Defense Command called a meeting in New York to plan for the defense of the eastern coast of the United States. As a result of the meeting, Air Corps officers set out to begin military operations at municipal airports along the eastern United States coast. On 11 December 1941, an Air Corps officer arrived at Charleston and announced to airport authorities, that the Army found it necessary to take control over part of the airport for defense of the east coast. Although an official base had not yet been established, in January 1942 anti-submarine missions began. An order was issued on 22 October 1942 that assigned the base to the Air Service Command and officially named the base as Charleston Army Air Base. During the fall of 1942, the base performed a dual role of defense and training. Anti-submarine missions continued to be flown each day and air depot and service groups destined for overseas received combat training. The base transferred from the Air Service Command to the First Air Force and became a training base for B-24 Liberator bomber crews destined for the European theater of operations. During 1 January 1944 to 30 May 1945, 8,630 completely trained B-24 combat crews graduated, enough to completely man the Eighth Air Force that took part in the war in Europe.

With the end of the war in Europe came a need to change the mission of Charleston Army Air Field. The demand for B-24 crews declined and the future of the base was not clear. Base leadership received verbal orders from Headquarters First Air Force to prepare to train B-17 crews and a number of pilots reported to receive their training. However, with an increased demand for air supply, representatives of the Air Transport Command visited the field to determine if it was appropriate to use as a Ferrying Division base. On 20 May 1945, Charleston Army Air Field transferred under the jurisdiction of Air Transport Command.





Transport operations continued until February 1946 when the War Department declared Charleston Army Air Field a surplus and inactivated the base. All base assets reverted to the War Assets Division and the city requested for the return of the airfield. By that time the base consisted of 2,050 acres and benefited from \$12 million worth of improvements. The Army surrendered the lease to the airfield on 19 October 1948 to the city. The airfield continued to serve as a Municipal Airport for the city.

In response to the Korean War, the newly activated Air Force came to Charleston in January 1953. In August, 50 C-119 Flying Boxcar aircraft arrived at Charleston under the Tactical Air Command's 456<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing (TCW). In preparation for the 456 TCW's deployment to Korea, the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Group, Atlantic Division, Military Air Transport (MATs) was activated on 15 January 1954 and assigned to Charleston Air Force Base.

The base received its first C-54 Sky Master aircraft on 4 March 1954. Nearly one year later on 1 March 1955, the Air Force transferred command of the base from Tactical Air Command to Military Air Transport Service and activated the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing. The 1608<sup>th</sup> took over all administration, operation, and maintenance of the base and inaugurated Charleston's airlift tradition. On 3 January 1956, MATs designated Charleston AFB as an Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE), and channel missions (regularly scheduled flights) to the Caribbean, Central America, North Africa, and the Mideast began.

The C-54 remained the primary aircraft utilized at Charleston AFB until the base received its first C-121C Super Constellation or "Connie" on 16 September 1955. The aircraft was dubbed "The City of Charleston" beginning a tradition of naming new aircraft after the city from which the base derives its name. As the construction boom of the 1950's continued, it was during this era that the temporary structures erected during World War II were demolished and many of the buildings still in use today were constructed, including family housing. As the new streets were laid out, the base named them after deceased South Carolinian veterans that received the





Distinguished Flying Cross or higher. The one exception remains “Graves Avenue,” which was already named after Brigadier General Davis D. Graves, first commander of the base. While street names were being decided, a possible new name for the base was also considered. The choice was narrowed down to Touhey AFB in honor of Captain Robert F. Touhey Jr., a former Charleston resident and Distinguished Flying Cross recipient. However, the Air Force decided to suspend memorialization requests while an Air Force wide review was conducted. The matter was dropped and soon forgotten. The bases mission also expanded during this time, by 1957 the base had three flying squadron’s operating the C-54 aircraft and two squadron’s flying C-121 aircraft. The base also had one C-47D and three C-45G aircraft assigned for instrument training, supply support, and personnel transportation.

In June 1958, the base received its first C-124C Globemaster II aircraft and transferred its last C-54 Skymaster. In August 1958, these aircraft delivered troops and supplies to Lebanon that was under threat by Iraq. In September the aircraft airlifted a squadron of F-104s to Taiwan, when communist China began shelling nearby islands.

Charleston contributed to the “Space Race” in the 1960’s by returning astronaut John Glenn’s space capsule, *Friendship 7* via C-124 to Cape Canaveral, Florida, following his pioneering orbit of the Earth on 20 February 1962. This event initiated Charleston’s long standing support of the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) from project, Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo through the fatal space shuttle *Challenger* disaster recovery.

The base received its first C-130E Hercules aircraft on 11 August 1962. The base assumed the task of annual resupply of OPERATION DEEP FREEZE at McMurdo Station, Anartica on 11 August 1962. The base transferred all its C-121Cs during May through June 1963 and by the end of the period, the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing had two squadrons (the 41<sup>st</sup> Air Transport Squadron and the 76<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron) flying C-130Es, and two squadrons (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Transport Squadron and





the 17<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron) flying C-124s. The advent of the C-130E arrival marked the beginning of airdrop and formation flying at Charleston and the forged a close working relationship with the Army Airborne units the wing supported. The C-130E remained at the base until 1967, when they were replaced by the C-141A.



Charleston Air Force Base became the second base, after Travis Air Force Base, to receive the C-141A Starlifter aircraft on 14 August 1965. The C-141's arrival launched the base into the jet age and would become the mainstay of Charleston and the airlift fleet for the next 30 years. By the end of 1967, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron's were flying C-141s. The 17<sup>th</sup> continued to operate the C-124 until the squadrons inactivation on 8 April 1969. Following the Starlifter's arrival, a change in Air Force doctrine recognized airlift as a distinct mission. This led to the reorganization and redesignation of airlift units, changing the Military Air Transport Service to the Military Airlift Command (MAC). The Air Force also inactivated the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing at Charleston and activated the 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing, previously an Air Force Reserve wing base at Chicago, Illinois. Additionally, Air Transport Squadrons were redesignated as Military Airlift Squadrons.





The wing's support to Southeast Asia increased with the escalation of United States involvement in the Vietnam War. During one of many missions performed by the wing during the Vietnam War, one of its C-141s came under ground attack while parked at Udorn Air Base, Thailand during a medical evacuation mission. Four crew members sustained injuries, two seriously during the attack. Technical Sergeant Paul E. Yonkie, a 34 year old Flight Engineer succumbed to injuries at Clark Air Base hospital in the Philippines. The base dedicated its new squadron operations building in memory of Sergeant Yonkie in September 1968 and dedicated a C-17A aircraft in his honor in September 1998. Sergeant Yonkie became Military Airlift Commands first casualty of the war.

Through the efforts of Congressman Mendel Rivers, Charleston became the first base to get the C-5A Galaxy aircraft. To accommodate the large aircraft, another construction boon ensued. Large hangars were constructed to house the largest aircraft in the world. However, the C-5s stay in Charleston was short lived. By July 1973, the wing swapped its C-5s for Dover AFB, Delaware C-141s.

During the withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973, the wing transported former prisoners of war to the United States and airlifted Americans and Vietnamese refugees from Vietnam during the fall of Saigon.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the wing participated in every major action, including URGENT FURY, the rescue of Americans from Grenada, OPERATION JUST CAUSE, the invasion of Panama, and a host of countless relief operations.

During the 1990s the wing participated in OPERATION DESERT STORM, OPERATION PROVIDE PROMISE, OPERATION SUPPORT HOPE, OPERATION VIGILANT WARRIOR, OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE, OPERATION DESERT STRIKE, OPERATION PIVOT SAIL, OPERATION PHOENIX SCORPION II and III, OPERATION PHOENIX DUKE, OPERATION NOBLE SHIRLEY, OPERATION DESERT FOX, and OPERATION ALLIED FORCE. On 14 June 1993, Charleston became the first to receive the C-17A





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



Globemaster III. The advent of the C-17 launched the base into a new era and sparked yet another construction boon. The 1950s infrastructure will be replaced with modern and efficient structures visually marking Charleston AFB as the premier airlift base.

As the world turned its calendars to a new millennium and the realization that the free world faced a different type of enemy , the need for capable airlift did not subside. Currently, Charleston AFB personnel and its C-17s are deployed around the globe in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.





## *437th Airlift Wing History*

The 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing traces its heritage back to the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group and the pivotal days of World War II. In anticipation of the historic D-Day invasion of Europe, the Army Air Corps activated the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group on 1 May 1943, at Baer Field, Indiana. A trained cadre of 57 officers and 62 enlisted men, led by Lieutenant Colonel Cedric E. Hudgens, formed the new unit. Once fully manned, the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group moved to the Air Corps glider training base at Sedalia Army Airfield Missouri (now Whiteman AFB) and began training in Douglas C-47 Skytrain aircraft and CG-4A glider towing operations. Training at Sedalia was intense and included overnight bivouacs and 30 mile marches. Once initial training was completed, the 437<sup>th</sup> moved to Pope Field, North Carolina in October 1943 for paratroop and airborne training with U.S. Army airborne units. During this move, the group's C-47s towed the group's gliders across country, releasing them in Kentucky, then landing for refueling before retrieving the gliders.

In January 1944, glider pilots, maintenance and support personnel, who had crossed the Atlantic by ship, met up with the 437<sup>th</sup>'s C-47 aircrews at Ramsbury Air Station in England. The C-47s and their crews had flown across the Atlantic via South America and North Africa. Ramsbury became the group's wartime operating base. At this time, the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group consisted of 338 officers, 1,127 enlisted men, 52 C-47s, and 125 CG-4A Gliders within four flying squadrons, the 83<sup>rd</sup>, the 84<sup>th</sup>, the 85<sup>th</sup>, and the 86<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadrons. During its stay at Ramsbury, the Group continually practiced glider towing and paratroop operations in preparation for the coming invasion. Life at Ramsbury was difficult, wartime rationing had taken its toll on the British Isles and conditions were Spartan. The men of the 437<sup>th</sup> dealt with little heat and hot water and primitive living facilities. The threat of air raids meant operating under blacked-out conditions and posed a significant hazard to training flights.

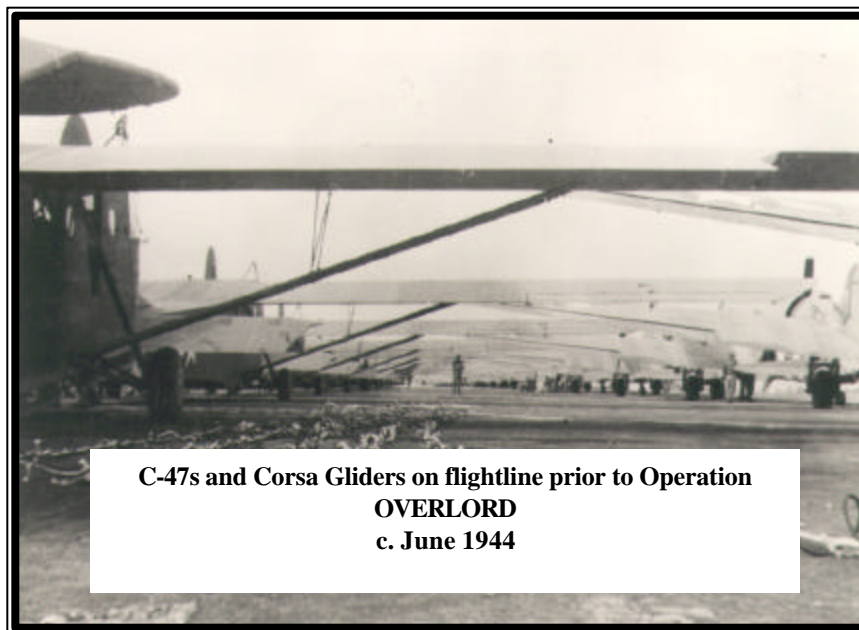






The English weather was also an ever present hindrance to operations, but as the future would show, provided the 437<sup>th</sup> with valuable experience.

Although everyone knew an Allied invasion was inevitable, the date and location was a closely guarded secret. On 29 May 1944, 18 planes and their crews from the 85<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron joined the 436<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group at another airfield. On 1 June 1944, the men of the 437<sup>th</sup> were restricted to the base. Troops from the 82d Airborne Division arrived at Ramsbury and set up camp. Due to the necessity for strict secrecy, the combat crew members were segregated from the rest of the group and no one was allowed to leave the base without approval from the intelligence section. Aircrews received meticulous briefings concerning the part they would soon play in the historic Normandy invasion, codenamed OVERLORD.



Group aircrews learned during the briefings that they would be releasing their gliders near Cherbourg, France. The three squadrons at Ramsbury would be transporting men from the Army's 82d Airborne Division, while their sister squadron, the 85<sup>th</sup>, on detached status to the 436<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group would have the honor of being the first of the group's squadron's to enter combat by paratropping 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne troops. The 101<sup>st</sup> would help secure the pathway from the beachhead at Utah





Beach. By holding the Germans, the Airborne troops would ensure the seizure of the vital port at Cherbourg.

At 2230 hours on 5 June 1944, an announcement at Ramsbury called for all combat personnel to report to the flight line. At 2300 hours, the men of the 85<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron took off from Membury with their passengers from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. An hour later the 83<sup>rd</sup>, 84<sup>th</sup>, and 86<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadrons left Ramsbury with gliders in tow carrying the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division troops. The group's would make three such flights from England to France, braving heavy flak and ground fire on each mission. The glider crews faced an even more hazardous situation. The C-47s at least contained some armor plating and did not land in the combat zone. The CG-4A Waco and Horsa crews piloted a powerless craft, made mostly of plywood and fabric, stretched over a frame of steel tubing. Landing was even more hazardous, hedgerows, trees, and man made obstacles could easily rip through the thin skinned craft when encountered on landings. Due to these conditions, very few gliders returned to England in tact.



Unidentified man with Horsa Glider "Missouri Myle"  
c. June 1944





The 437<sup>th</sup>'s contributions to the war effort was not limited to the Normandy invasion. In July 1944, a detachment from the group went to Italy in preparation for the invasion of southern France, OPERATION DRAGOON. The invasion had four purposes: to engage the Germans and thus keep them preoccupied in the south; to capture a port for use by invading Allied ground forces; to liberate France; and to allow the Allied forces in the south to join up with the Normandy invading forces and form a decisive battle front with German Army's western front. The 437<sup>th</sup>'s contributed to the 413 C-47s and 407 gliders from various Troop Carrier units that participated in the operation. The 437<sup>th</sup> transported airborne troops into southern France from bases in Italy. The airborne invasion forces met little opposition during the invasion. Although ground fog and enemy planted glider obstacles caused severe problems for some gliders, the operation as a whole was a great success for the Allies.

Between the invasion of southern France and the airborne assault on Holland, the 437<sup>th</sup> carried supplies to the front lines in France. The supply missions abruptly ended in preparation for what would become the largest airborne invasion, named OPERATION MARKET GARDEN. As the group's planes and gliders were prepared, troops from the Army's 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division gathered at Ramsbury.

After their success in southern France, the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group returned to Ramsbury, England. A month later, on 17 September 1944, the 437<sup>th</sup> took part in the pivotal airborne assault on Holland. It was through Holland that the Allies hoped to breach the implacable Siegfried Line and cross the Rhine River into Germany. On 17 September 1944, 70 C-47s towed 70 CG-4A gliders from Ramsbury with passengers from the 101<sup>st</sup>. Of the 70 gliders: 53 successfully landed; 3 crashed; 2 were dropped in England; 1 was lost over the English Channel; 7 landed in enemy territory; and 2 landed elsewhere off their landing zone. It was a dark day for the 437<sup>th</sup>, they lost more men than on any other missions combined. The heavy flak and small arms fire encountered during the daylight invasion exacted a heavy toll on the 437<sup>th</sup>'s aircraft.





The group flew two additional missions into Holland ferrying supplies to the Allied troops before the operation ended.

As winter approached, the 437<sup>th</sup> again delivered supplies into France and Belgium. After an air evacuation squadron joined the group at Ramsbury, the group began air evacuating wounded back to England. In December, a freezing fog settled in over England and the European Continent. The weather allowed the Germans to make advances during their final counterattack against the Allies leading up to a show down at Bastogne, Belgium. The severe weather grounded English airfields and made flying impossible. The group could only monitor the dire situation of the ground troops surrounded at Bastogne.

Finally, on 22 December 1944, the fog lifted and the planes of the 437<sup>th</sup> took off to airdrop supplies to their comrades in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division at Bastogne. Christmas came early to the 101<sup>st</sup>, who had been critically short of ammunition and supplies before the airdrop. The group would make several more supply missions during 22 through 26 December that enabled the 101<sup>st</sup> hold out until Allied tanks from the south managed to break through the German lines and lift the siege on Bastogne.

Following the operations at Bastogne, the group moved to Coulemmiers, France, in February 1945. While there, the 437<sup>th</sup> began operations that would become their final combat operation of the war, OPERATION VARSITY, the airborne assault over the Rhine.

OPERATION VARSITY called for the 437<sup>th</sup> to assist airdrop operations and airland two British airborne divisions near Wesel, Germany. Those two divisions linked up with other Allied forces that delivered a fatal thrust into the heart of Germany. The landing and dropping of the airborne division was accomplished with little interference and most gliders and planes reached their targets. The 437<sup>th</sup> did their part by using their C-47s to tow two gliders at once. Several of the 437<sup>th</sup>'s crews had narrow escapes after crash landings in Germany. A few were even taken prisoner for a short while.





**437th Troop Carrier Group Headquarters  
Coulemmier, France  
c. 1945**

Following the success of those operations, the 437<sup>th</sup> began ferrying wounded troops and released Prisoners of War out of Germany. Soon after the Germans surrendered on 8 May 1945, the 437<sup>th</sup> began to pull up stakes at Coulemmiers and by August, the group was back in the U.S. Group personnel were sent to Army bases nearest their hometown where most were discharged at the end of the war. The 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group was inactivated on 15 November 1945.

The Air Force later reactivated the group during the Korean War, (having been activated in the reserves in 1949) where it again served honorably while stationed at Brady Field, Japan. Between December 1950 and June 1952, the group evacuated personnel from threatened airfields, hauled gasoline, napalm, and other explosives, dropped cargo and paratroops, flew spraying missions to rid areas of insects, and also flew routine courier missions from Japan to United Nations bases in Korea. On 10 June 1952, the Air Force again inactivated the wing and then reactivated the unit at O'Hare Airport, Illinois, as a Reserve wing on 15 June 1952 and inactivated on 16 November 1957.







The group was again activated on 27 December 1965 and redesignated as the 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing and replaced the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing at Charleston Air Force Base on 8 January 1966.

On 1 October 1993, the wing and base underwent a major reorganizational restructuring under the objective wing “One wing, one base, one boss” concept. The flying squadrons changed from Military Airlift Squadrons to Airlift Squadrons and established four groups under the Wing Commander position. Additionally, the Wing Commander position was upgraded to a general officer. In an attempt to preserve the heritage of certain historical units, the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing was activated on 1 October 1993. The 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing replaced the 46<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 76<sup>th</sup> designations.

**437th Troop Carrier Wing**  
**Brady Field, Japan**  
**c. 1950**

Charleston personnel continue to be deployed around the globe, often in harms way. Several Charleston personnel were among the victims of the terrorist attack on





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



US facilities at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in June 1996. Additionally, the wing has played a key role in hundreds of humanitarian operations, in the US and overseas.

On 15 July 2000, the wing ended its 35 year association with the C-141 Starlifter and officially transitioned to the C-17A Globemaster III. Due to the transition, the wing also inactivated the 16<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron

Today, the men and women of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing carry the memory of those brave men that left their mark on history and continue to add to the proud heritage of the wing through the countless deployments and humanitarian missions performed.





## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1949**

- 10 May 1949      Established as the 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium
- 27 June 1949      The 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium was activated in the Reserve at Chicago-O'Hare International Airport.
- 27 June 1949 -  
10 August 1950      Training and support for the 437<sup>th</sup> Wing was provided by the 2471<sup>st</sup> Air Force Reserve Training Center at Chicago-Orchard Airport III. Wing elements became proficient in T-7, T-11, and C-46 aircraft. Shortage of airmen in some technical specialties, particularly radio operators, flight engineers, and medics, was a persistent problem.
- 29 April -  
2 May 1949      Five C-46's and crews from Greenville AFB, S.C., participated in OPERATION SWARMER. Due to doubts of Reserve capabilities, only one mission was performed, with a simulated load.

### **1950**

- 9-24 June 1950      In its first major airlift, the wing moved 382 National Guardsmen from Lowry AFB, Colorado to Camp Grayling, Michigan.
- 1 August 1950      Reorganization in preparation for wing's entry into active service. Four support squadrons activated (air police, motor vehicle, food service, and installations) and the 86<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron inactivated.
- 1 August 1950      More than 500 people added to the wing from other reserve units and from the Reserve Training Center from O'Hare in an attempt to man all 437<sup>th</sup> Wing elements.
- 10 August 1950      Ordered into the active military service. The wing reports 1,222 personnel.
- 18 August 1950      Assumed control of 15 C-46's at O'Hare and moved to Shaw AFB, S.C., airlifting 600 reservists and 93,400 pounds of equipment in 48 round trips.
- 15 August 1950      Main movement of personnel to Shaw AFB. Personnel with private vehicles allowed to drive.







## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 15 August-  
16 October 1950      Intensive combat training condensed into a “crash” course under Tactical Air Command guidance. Strength increased to 100 percent of authorizations.
- 16 October -  
8 November 1950      Movement to Brady Field, Japan began. Main body moved by rail to Camp Stoneman, California and embarked on 24 October aboard the USS Anderson. Two advance groups were flown by Military Air Transport Service arriving at Brady Field on 23 and 29 October. The C-46's of the air echelon began departing Shaw AFB on 29 October and were equipped with special fuel tanks at McClellan AFB, California. The first three C-46's reached Brady Field on 8 November, same day as the main body.
- 8 November 1950      Brady Field had an inadequate airstrip and a few small hangers. Tents, mess halls, latrines, and other facilities were still in construction.
- 8 November -  
23 December 1950      Air echelon arrived at Brady Field at staggered intervals, delayed by fuel tank installations and tropical storms enroute. The final C-46 arrived on 23 December.
- 10 November 1950      First combat mission flown. Three wing C-46's airlift 15 tons of aviation fuel to Pyongyang.
- 10 November -  
31 December 1950      Wing aircraft flew 3,471 hours during 1,557 effective sorties, airlifting 7,699 passengers, 5,501 patients, and 4,033 tons of cargo. Even the Air Base Group's two C-47 administrative support aircraft were pressed into service for three intensive days at Pyongyang, as the wing assisted the evacuation of Sinanjou, Yonpo, Pyongyang, Kimpo, and other Korean airstrips. Cargo included napalm, shells, bombs, explosives, and gasoline. Although sometimes encountering enemy ground fire, C-46 crews termed most of the missions routine and uneventful.
- December 1950      In addition to its normal cargo and passenger sorties, the wing assumed responsibility for most of the scheduled courier flights in Japan and Korea in support of the FEAF Combat Cargo Command.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### 1951

- 1 January 1951 - 10 June 1952 With an average of 56.6 C-46's available, the wing flew 76,460 mission hours, carrying 61,945 tons of cargo and 232,653 passengers, including 985 patients.
- 24 February 1951 Paratroop missions were inaugurated as a means of supplying front line troops of the US Eighth Army. The first paratroop consisted of four tons of "C" rations.
- 23 March 1951 Staging out of Taegu, 48 C-46's carried paratroops and 15.5 tons of cargo for the 187<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team and the 2d and 4<sup>th</sup> Ranger Companies to two drop zones near Seoul. Enemy interference was light and inaccurate.
- June-October 1951 Korea's waste disposal methods were primitive, so DDT spraying missions were flown regularly at 50 to 100 feet altitude over all main airstrips in Korea to kill insects and hold down disease. The Eighth Army's surgeon reported that the spraying drastically reduced insect-borne diseases.
- 14 October 1951 Typhoon Ruth hit Brady Field, destroying all 365 tents used as quarters and extensively damaged all wooden structures. Unevacuated aircraft also received serious damage.

### 1952

- February 1952 One C-46 crew bailed out of their battle damaged aircraft over enemy lines and were captured.





17 May 1952                      Thirty three C-46's transported 800 troops and 26.3 tons of cargo for the 187<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team to Pusan, Korea to quell prisoner of war riots at Kojedo.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

10 June 1952                      The 437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing was inactivated at Brady Field.

15 June 1952                      The wing was activated at O'Hare International Airport and attached to the 2471<sup>st</sup> AFRTC for support.

15 June 1952 -  
16 November 1957              Tactical elements trained in C-46 aircraft, and routine ground training was provided one weekend each month. Airman manning became a major concern, and sporadic recruiting drives had little success. As aircrews became proficient, cross country flying, navigation, cruise control, night flying, was emphasized to combat qualify as many reservists as possible.

### **1957**

January-June 1957              During this period, wing pilots logged 3,208 flying hours. In preparation for the conversion to C-119's, six wing pilots and one engineer received training at Bakalar AFB, Indiana, and by 30 June the first reserve pilot completed his C-119 standardization check. Nine C-119's were assigned to the O'Hare reserve center as the C-46 phase out began.

16 November 1957              The wing was again inactivated.

### **1965**

27 December 1965              The wing was activated and redesignated the 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing

### **1966**

8 January 1966                      The 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing was organized and assigned to Charleston AFB, South Carolina, replacing the 1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing.





12 January 1966      The 3d Airlift Squadron airlifted the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Pleiku, South Vietnam. Code named BLUE LIGHT, this operation airlifted 3,000 troops and 47,000 tons of equipment during seven missions.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

17 March 1966      Wing C-130 aircraft from the 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron assisted in the return of Gemini 8 after splash down in the Pacific. A NASA crew was picked up at Patrick AFB, Florida and airlifted to Naha AFB, Okinawa.

1 April 1966      The 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing began operating new cargo channels, flying the modified polar route. The new channel originated at Charleston and served Pacific offlead points as Clark AFB, Philippines, and Ton Son Nhut, Vietnam, via Alaska and Japan. The C-141 Starlifter served as the primary aircraft.

19 April 1966      The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron began its conversion to the C-141 Starlifter from the C-130 aircraft.

2 July 1966      The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron completed its conversion to the C-141 Starlifter.

27 July 1966      A 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron C-130 and crew returned Gemini 10 from Mayport Naval Air Station, Florida to McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri.

31 August 1966      Work began on an additional nine holes of the Charleston AFB golf course.

17 September 1966      A C-141 from the 3d Military Airlift Squadron transported Gemini 11 from Mayport Naval Air Station, Florida to McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri.

18 November 1966      A C-130 from the 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron airlifted Gemini 12 from Mayport Naval Air Station, Florida to McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri.





2 December 1966      A wing C-141 reached a milestone when it completed eight globe circling Embassy flights within an eight week period.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1967**

1 February 1967      The 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron's conversion from C-130 to C-141 aircraft began.

1 March 1967      The 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Airlift Squadron dropped 28 containers weighing 67,200 pounds during airdrop procedures at Holland Drop Zone, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This set an un-official C-141 world record for the heaviest low altitude airdrop of cargo in Military Airlift Command's history.

15 May 1967      The last C-130 Hercules cleared the Charleston AFB runway marking the last flight for a 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing Hercules aircraft.

25 May 1967      The new Rivers Gate facility was dedicated by Brigadier General William V. McBride, 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing Commander. The structure was a gift from the Charleston Squadron of the Air Force Association.

4 November 1967      Final nine holes of Charleston AFB's golf course opened for play.

17-20 November 1967      EAGLE THRUST, the airlift of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division from CONUS to Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam.





21 December 1967      A Charleston AFB Globemaster crew led rescue ships to scene where a Japanese fishing boat sunk, rescuing 16 fishermen.

## **1968**

13-23 February 1967      BONNY JACK, the airlift of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division to Southeast Asia was conducted.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

28 May 1968      Six wing C-141's participated in OPERATION COLD MASS. The operation was the largest armada of jet transports assembled for the purpose of dropping paratroops.

3 June 1968      Thirteen aircrews, eight aircraft and 40 maintenance and support personnel participated in the NATO exercise POLAR EXPRESS in Northern Norway.

23 June 1968      The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron achieved 400,000 accident free flying hours. The achievement covered ten years of flying, beginning with the squadron at Kelly AFB, Texas.

10 July 1968      The 17<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron was awarded a flight safety award for 200,000 accident free flying hours spanning seven years. The 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron received a two year award for 79,100 accident free flying hours.

1 August 1968      The Equal Housing Program became effective for all base members that resided off base. A housing referral office was established to monitor the program.

24 August 1968      The C-141 Starlifter, "City of Charleston", marked the third anniversary of the wing's association with the C-141 by making a 53d trip around the world.





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



- 1 September 1968 TSgt Paul Yonkie, 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron died at Clark AFB, Philippines as a result of wounds received on 28 July at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand.
- 11 September 1968 Captain Robert F. Schultz, 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds sustained at Udorn Royal Thai AFB on 26 July 1968.
- 6 December 1968 The 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 11 July 1967 to 10 July 1968.

### **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

#### **1969**

- 8 October 1969 DEEP FREEZE missions to Christ Church, New Zealand began.
- 5 December 1969 The 437<sup>th</sup> supported Apollo 12 airlifting maintenance personnel and equipment to Hawaii.
- 22 December 1969 Four Charleston based loadmasters participated in the first airdrop from a C-5 Galaxy at Pope AFB, North Carolina.

#### **1970**

- 1 January 1970 Project Blue Book ended. The research program was the study of unidentified flying objects, and had been in existence for two decades. Investigators proved 90 percent of Charleston sightings to be reflections from Navy operations at sea off the South Carolina coast, and reflected lights of aircraft. No sightings here warranted further investigation by Air Force or other officials.
- 6 June 1970 The wing's first C-5A Galaxy arrives. The plane lost one wheel and suffered one blown tire upon landing.

#### **1972**



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*Team Charleston*





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



29 October 1972      A 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Airlift Squadron C-5 crew began the first C-5 around the world trip. The crew logged 95.5 flying hours during the 16 day voyage that required six different C-5s during seventeen missions to seven different countries.

22 December 1972      The C-5 Galaxy received outstanding performance evaluations by the Air Force on the eve of the aircraft's third anniversary.

### **1973**

17 April 1973      The Department of Defense and the Military Airlift Command announced that Charleston AFB would swap its C-5 Galaxy aircraft with Dover AFB C-141s. Authorized positions would decrease by 684 military and 83 civilian slots at Charleston.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1974**

1 February 1974      The wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award from 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force Commander Major General Lester Kearney.

### **1975**

6 February 1975      Exercise JACK FROST began with a deployment of C-141s from Charleston to various unloading stations and then to Alaska for employment of exercise forces.

### **1976**

December 1976      A system of "Block Wardens" was instituted on Charleston AFB, to increase security, monitor safety procedures, and energy conservation.

29 December 1976      The 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing conducted its first support mission for President Elect Jimmy Carter.

### **1977**







## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



June 1977                      Four Noncommissioned Officers became first Charleston AFB members to receive an Associate in Applied Science degree from the Community College of the Air Force.

29 July 1977                The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron was awarded a 24 year flying safety award. The squadron logged 650,000 safe flying hours and had been without a major accident since the squadron was reconstituted in 1952.

### **1978**

24 February 1978        The wing welcomed 2Lt Karen L. Hall, its first female Security Police Officer.

1 March 1978              Disco became a seven night a week feature at the Airmans Club.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1979**

6 September 1979        A 41<sup>st</sup> Airlift Squadron C-141 suffered front landing gear failure upon landing at Charleston AFB. All crew members exited the aircraft safely, however the aircraft was a total loss.

8 September 1979        Charleston AFB Fire Department received the new \$436,000 P-15 crash firefighting vehicle. The largest fire truck in the world measured 45 feet long, 10 feet wide, and stood 13 ½ feet high.

10 September 1979      As gasoline prices soared, thefts of bicycles increased within the Charleston AFB community. Thirty nine bicycles were reported stolen within a six month period.

### **1980**

1 January 1980            The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron was named Military Airlift Commands Flying Squadron of the Year.





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



1 October 1980      The Explosives Ordnance Disposal Branch, Supply, assumed conventional commitment for Charleston AFB explosive ordnance disposal.

### **1981**

1 October 1981      The 437<sup>th</sup> Services Squadron was activated, Lt Col Donald E. Johnson named squadron commander.

2 October 1981      Five wing C-141s received the camouflage paint designated the European One Paint Scheme.

15-16 October 1981      Wing C-141s departed Pope AFB for an airdrop at Cairo East for the longest distance traveled for any airdrop, also the largest drop of personnel since WWII.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1982**

28 March 1982      An earthquake, centered in Dorchester County, measured 3.5 on the Richter Scale shook Charleston AFB. No damage reported

31 August 1982      A wing C-141 was reported missing during a routine training mission. Last contact cleared the aircraft to descend and begin a low level training route north of Scottsboro, Alabama.

1 November 1982      Rescuers discover the crash site of the mission wing C-141. The aircraft was located about 75 feet from the crest of John's Knob, a 4,900 foot mountain in the Tellico wildlife area of Tennessee. Nine crewmembers perished in the crash.

### **1983**



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*Team Charleston*





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



- 26 August 1983      The 76<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron achieved 750,000 safe flying hours. This achievement was a first in the Air Force.
- 26 October 1983      The first evacuees from Grenada arrive at Charleston AFB aboard a C-141B. Massive preparations by base officials, State Department, South Carolina state agencies, and the Red Cross resulted in a smooth, effective reception.
- 3 November 1983      A memorial to 437<sup>th</sup>/1608<sup>th</sup>/315<sup>th</sup> aircrews killed in the line of duty was dedicated by wing and Air Force Association officials.

### **1984**

- 12 July 1984      A C-141B from the 315<sup>th</sup> Reserve Wing crashed near Signoella, Sicily, Italy killing eight crewmembers and one passenger.

### **1985**

- 18 January 1985      Charleston's NCO Open Mess was opened to the airmen of Charleston AFB.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### **1986**

- October 1986      The new 36,000 square foot Wing Headquarters building opened at a cost of \$3,200,000.
- November 1986      The wing returned former Lebanon hostage David Jacobsen from Frankfurt, West Germany to the United States.

### **1987**



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*Team Charleston*





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



- 5 January 1987 The 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing became the first C-141 unit to maintain a 24 hour, 7 day a week alert posture. This was a Joint Chiefs of Staff initiative.
- 8 April 1987 The 437<sup>th</sup> Finance Disbursing Unit was redesignated the 437<sup>th</sup> Comptroller Squadron.
- 17 May 1987 A 20<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron crew airlifted two Navy Petty Officers that received critical burns from an Iraqi aircraft that fired two Exocet missiles at the USS Stark.
- 18 September 1987 In conjunction with the Air Force's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, the Charleston AFB Air Park was dedicated. On static display were a C-47, C-121, and a C-124.

### **1989**

- 13 July 1989 The NCO Club held a grand opening ceremony after 22 months of renovation work that totaled \$1,859,066.
- 18 July 1989 The 437<sup>th</sup> Mission Support Squadron activated and assumed the responsibilities of the discontinued Headquarters Squadron.
- 21 September -  
5 October 1989 Five wing crews flew 34 missions directly attributed to Hurricane Hugo. Charleston crews transported United States Army troops and supplies into St. Croix, Virgin Islands to provide much needed security for the residents.

## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 21 September 1989 Hurricane Hugo slams into the Charleston, South Carolina area. Charleston sustained over \$35 million in damage. The local area sustained \$2-3 billion damage.
- 21 September 1989 The newly renovated and opened NCO Club was completely destroyed by Hugo. Work immediately began to repair the facility at an estimated cost of \$1,720,000.



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*Team Charleston*





## *437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



- 18 October 1989      The wing transported 7,000 gallons of drinking water and 32 portable generators to San Francisco the day after an earthquake that measured 7.0 on the Richter Scale hit the area.
- 15 November 1989      The 437<sup>th</sup> received its ninth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of 1 July 1988-20 June 1989.
- 18 December -  
29 December 1989      The 437<sup>th</sup> and 315<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wings flew 57 missions in support of OPERATION JUST CAUSE in Panama.

### **1990**

- 12 March 1990      A 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron crew airlifted Haitian President Prosper Avril and his family to Homestead AFB, Florida to begin their new life in exile.
- June 1990      The NCO Club reopened after undergoing renovations caused from Hurricane Hugo.

### **1991**

- 25 July 1991      Colonel Thomas R. Mikolajcik assumed command of the 437<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing from Colonel Howard J. Ingersoll.
- 5 September 1991      The NonCommissioned Officer Leadership School At Charleston AFB held its final graduation. The school reorganized as the Airman's Leadership School.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 15 September 1991 The first C-17, designated T-1, made its inaugural flight from the Douglas Aircraft Company facility in Long Beach, California to Edwards AFB where it went through extensive testing.
- 1 October 1991 The wing underwent a major reorganization as part of the Air Force's objective wing concept. The wing was redesignated as 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and numerous other changes occurred through activations, consolidations, redesignations, and reassignments.
- 19 October 1991 The wing hosted over 30,000 visitors during the 1991 Charleston AFB Open House.
- 1 December 1991 The 437<sup>th</sup> Contracting Squadron was activated and assigned to the 437<sup>th</sup> Logistics Group. Major E. Klingman was the squadron's first commander.

## 1992

- 1 April 1992 The 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron relocated from Norton AFB, California to Charleston for reassignment to the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing. The squadron replaced the 41<sup>st</sup> Military Airlift Squadron which was inactivated and all assigned personnel and equipment transferred to the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 1 June 1992 Air Mobility Command was established and formed from Military Airlift Command and Strategic Air Command which were inactivated.
- 15 August 1992 The first class of C-17 maintenance personnel selected to work on the C-17 completed the first phase of training.
- 17 August 1992 The first eight pilots selected to fly the C-17 began initial qualification/ground training. The pilots: three from the 437<sup>th</sup>; two from the 315<sup>th</sup>; two from HQ AMC; and an Air Force Material Command plant representative received instruction through a computer base training program, simulator training, and static ground training.
- 20 August -  
31 December 1992 Wing aircrews airlifted 300 military personnel, along with 500,000 pounds of supplies and equipment to Mombasa, Kenya in support of OPERATION PROVIDE RELIEF.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 23 August - The wing supported emergency assistance efforts in south Florida  
24 September 1992 following the devastation of Hurricane Andrew. Charleston AFB was established as the C-141B stage base and wing crews completed 35 mission to the area.
- 8 December - The wing provided crews, aircraft, and ground support personnel for  
31 December 1992 OPERATION RESTORE HOPE, a United Nations humanitarian relief effort for Somalia. The wing airlifted 240,000 pounds of supplies and equipment on seven missions to Mogadishu.
- 10 December 1992 The initial cadre of pilots, loadmasters, and maintenance personnel completed their initial qualification/ground training.
- 31 December 1992 The wing supported 129 PHOENIX BANNER (Presidential) missions during CY 92. Wing crews logged 910 flying hours transporting White House and Secret Service personnel and equipment to 33 states and 10 foreign countries. The wing also supported 52 PHOENIX SILVER (Vice President) missions and 488 hours.

## 1993

- 5 February 1993 HQ USAF officially approved the name Globemaster III for the C-17A.
- 11-12 June 1993 General Merrill A. McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff piloted the first C-17A Globemaster III assigned to the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing from Long Beach, California to Little Rock AFB, Arkansas in conjunction with AMC's Airlift Rodeo.
- 14 June 1993 The first production model McDonnell Douglas C-17A Globemaster III, number 89-1192 arrived at Charleston AFB with General McPeak at the controls.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### 1994

- March 1994                      The 14<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron became the wing's second C-17 Squadron.
- May-July 1994                The wing deployed five aircraft to Germany in support of OPERATION PROVIDE PROMISE, airlifting supplies to war torn Bosnia. Two aircraft sustained damage after being fired upon. One aircraft received one bullet hole, the other 22 holes.
- 1 August 1994                The 437<sup>th</sup> Component Repair Squadron inactivated. The 437<sup>th</sup> Equipment Maintenance Squadron was redesignated the 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron.
- 15 August 1994              Air Mobility Command closed out its airlift support for OPERATION SUPPORT HOPE. The command performed 503 missions to Rwanda, transported 4,375 passengers and over 8,000 tons of relief cargo.
- October 1994                 Two wing C-17 aircraft flew its first operational missions nonstop from Langley AFB, Virginia to the Persian Gulf in support of OPERATION VIGILANT WARRIOR. The operation was the buildup of United States military forces in response to Iraq's movement toward Kuwait since the Gulf War's end in 1991.

### 1996

- 6 April 1996                 A Charleston AFB, C-17 returned the remains of Secretary Brown and 32 other personnel that perished when their CT-43A aircraft crashed on 3 April into a mountainside in Croatia.
- 9 April -  
18 April 1996                Five wing C-141's and six C-17's supported OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE, a non-combatant evacuation operation to extricate Americans and foreign nationals out Liberia during a civil war. The wing helped evacuate 261 personnel and 141,000 pounds of cargo.







## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 25 June 1996 A terrorist bomb kills 19 airmen at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Two wing personnel, Capt Sandra Beneway and Capt Andrew Baker received injuries during the blast and later received the Purple Heart. Capt Beneway lost her left eye and was believed to be the first 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing woman to receive the Purple Heart.
- 11 September 1996 Charleston C-17's supported OPERATION DESERT STRIKE, the deployment of F-117 and B-52 aircraft to Southwest Asia. The deployment was in response to an Iraqi missile attack on two US F-16's patrolling the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq.
- 27 September 1996 The Charleston AFB newspaper changed names from the *Airlift Spirit* to the *Airlift Dispatch*. The paper had been known as the *Airlift Spirit* since 1960.

## 1997

- 15 January 1997 Charleston AFB opened its new Recreation Center. The \$796,000 facility even featured an indoors climbing wall.
- 1 April 1997 The 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron was redesignated the 437<sup>th</sup> Equipment Maintenance Squadron. The 437<sup>th</sup> Component Repair Squadron, previously inactivated on 1 August 1994 was activated. Personnel previously assigned to the 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron were reassigned according to speciality into the two squadron.
- 1 July 1997 Headquarters AMC redesignated all AMC Security Police Squadrons as Security Forces Squadrons.
- 29 September 1997 The 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1997.
- 2 November -  
6 November 1997 Wing C-17 aircraft airlifted six MIG-29 fighters from Moldova to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio during OPERATION PIVOT SAIL. The United States purchased the fighters to prevent cash strapped former Warsaw pact countries from selling the weapons to potential US enemies.





*437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Heritage*



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*Team Charleston*





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

19 November 1997 The wing deployed 16 personnel along with one C-141, and two C-17's in response to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's continued interference during NATO ordered weapons inspections.

### 1998

16 January 1998 The wing supported relief efforts to earthquake stricken China. The wing airlifted 81,000 pounds of needed supplies to the province.

2 February -  
26 February 1998 The wing deployed 240 personnel to 25 separate locations in support of PHOENIX SCORPION II. The build up of military forces was in response to Saddam Hussein's refusal to allow weapons inspectors access to potential weapons sites.

1 June -  
20 June 1998 The wing deployed 100 support personnel along with eight Charleston AFB C-17's and 12 additional aircrews in support of the redeployment of United States troops from Southwest Asia.

1 July 1998 The 437<sup>th</sup> Dental Squadron inactivated and redesignated the 437<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Medicine Squadron as 437<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical-Dental Squadron.

9 September A wing C-17A transported a killer whale from Newport, Oregon to Westman, Iceland during OPERATION KEIKO LIFT.

21-30 September Hurricane Georges left a trail of death and destruction across the Caribbean region and the southern United States coast.

23 September-  
6 October 1998 The 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift wing conducted 22 humanitarian missions into the Caribbean region that transported over 827 tons of needed supplies and equipment in the aftermath of Hurricane Georges.

24 September 1998 After two years of construction, the wing officially opened the new collocated club.

24 September-  
27 October 1998 In support of possible North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes against Yugoslavia, the wing conducted 60 missions that transported 1,782 passengers and 1,212 tons of cargo into the European theater in support of OPERATION PHOENIX DUKE.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

26 October- 4 November 1998	Hurricane Mitch struck Central America and caused over \$5 billion in damages and killed over 11,000 people.
6 November- 9 December 1998	The wing conducted 34 humanitarian missions and transported over 459 tons of supplies into Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.
11-13 November 1998	The wing deployed 13 wing C-17A aircraft along with 39 additional crew members and 183 support personnel to locations throughout the European and Southwest Asian theaters in support of OPERATION PHOENIX SCORPION III.
9-23 December 1998	Seven wing C-17As transported nine United States Army patriot missiles and launchers to positions in Israel during OPERATION NOBLE SHIRLEY.
14 December 1998	The wing was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998.
16-22 December 1998	The wing conducted 77 sorties and transported 474 personnel along with 1,060 tons of cargo in support of OPERATION DESERT FOX.

## 1999

19 February	The wing forward staged 13 C-17s and 135 maintenance personnel into the European theater in support of possible North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes against Yugoslavia.
23 March	Colonel Robert D. Bishop, Jr., 437 <sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Commander deployed to Ramstein Air Base, Germany to direct and control airlift and tanker activity in Europe during Operation ALLIED FORCE.
8 April-9 May	In support of Operation ALLIED FORCE, initial cadre's of 437 <sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing aircraft and support personnel arrived at Ramstein AB, Germany and formed the 437 <sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Group. Under the command of Colonel Ronald Richardson, the deployment marked the first Expeditionary Air Force deployment of a C-17 squadron.





## **HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS**

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

- 9 April                      The wing's Special Operations Low Level II (SOLL II) mission officially transferred to McGuire AFB, New Jersey. The mission transfer directly resulted from the wing's phase-out of the C-141B aircraft. The wing performed the mission since 5 January 1987.
- 9 May                        The 437<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Group at Ramstein Air Base, Germany inactivated.
- 9 June-30 June            In anticipation of a cease-fire resolution between NATO and Yugoslav forces, the 437<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Group was reestablished at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The reestablishment of the group was necessary to transport Army peacekeeping forces into Macedonia.
- 20 June                     North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Javier Solana officially terminated Operation ALLIED FORCE.
- 1 October                  Due to the wing's transition to the C-17A, the 637<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron inactivated.
- 10 December              Major General John D. Hopper, Jr., 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force Commander, officially opened the first phase of the Hunley Park housing project.

## **2000**

- 2 January                  The much anticipated Year 2000 (Y2K) passed uneventfully at Charleston AFB. The wing experienced minimal computer related failures and no disruptions in normal operations.
- 20 March                  Brigadier General Robert D. Bishop relinquished command of the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing to Colonel Vern (Rusty) Findley.
- 15 July                     The 16<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron inactivated as the wing bid farewell to the C-141B Starlifter. The ceremony effectively marked the end of the wing's 35 year relationship with the aircraft.
- 14 October                The wing welcomed over 60,000 visitors during Air Expo 2000.





## HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Random Selections from 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Chronology Archives)

### 2001

- 4 January 2001 One wing C-17A transported National Air and Space Administration (NASA) Mars Odessey spacecraft from Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado to Cape Canaveral, Florida. The \$176 million orbiter weighed more than 8,000 pounds and was scheduled to launch for a mission to Mars on 7 April 2001.
- 19-27 January 2001 The wing deployed 300 personnel to North Auxillary Airfield, South Carolina for the wing exercise CRISIS LOOK 01-02. The exercise marked the first full-scale operational readiness exercise for the wing since August 1998.
- 26 March 2001 Colonel Vern M. Findley, 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Commander officially opened the new \$5.2 million base dining facility.
- 12 April 2001 One wing C-17A transported 24 detainees from Andersen AFB, Guam to Hickam AFB, Hawaii during OPERATION VALIANT RETURN. The repatriation mission was the result of a U.S. Navy EP-3 aircraft that was clipped in mid-air by a Chinese F-8 fighter jet. The EP-3 aircrew was detained 11 days by Chinese officials.
- 19 May 2001 The wing hosted over 175,000 visitors during Air Expo 2001. The United States Navy aerial demonstration team, the Blue Angels highlighted the airshow.





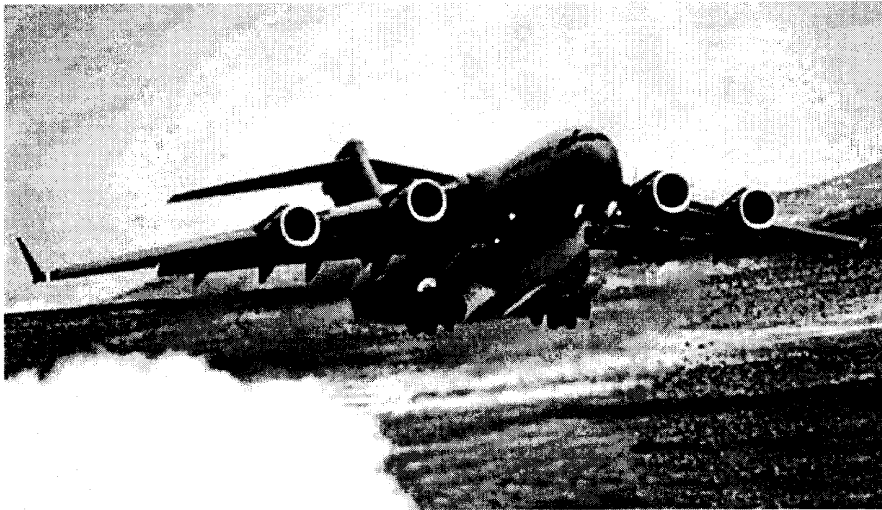
C-17 Globemaster III



# FACT SHEET

USAF Fact Sheet

## C-17 Globemaster III

*USAF photo by 1st Lt. Laurel Scherer*

### Mission

The C-17 Globemaster III is the newest, most flexible cargo aircraft to enter the airlift force. The C-17 is capable of rapid strategic delivery of troops and all types of cargo to main operating bases or directly to forward bases in the deployment area. The aircraft is also able to perform tactical airlift and airdrop missions when required. The inherent flexibility and performance characteristics of the C-17 force improve the ability of the total airlift system to fulfill the worldwide air mobility requirements of the United States.

The ultimate measure of airlift effectiveness is the ability to rapidly project and sustain an effective combat force close to a potential battle area. Threats to U.S. interests have changed in recent years, and the size and weight of U.S.-mechanized firepower and equipment have grown in response to improved capabilities of potential adversaries. This trend has significantly increased air mobility requirements, particularly in the area of large or heavy outsize cargo. As a result, newer and more flexible airlift aircraft are needed to meet potential armed contingencies, peacekeeping or humanitarian missions worldwide. The C-17 was designed and built with this new world order in mind.

### Features

The operational requirements impose demanding reliability and maintainability of the C-17 system. These requirements include an aircraft mission completion success probability of 92 percent, only 20 aircraft maintenance manhours per flying hour, and full and partial mission capable rates of 74.7 and 82.5 percent respectively. The Boeing warranty assures these figures will be met.

The C-17 measures approximately 174 feet (53 meters) long with a wingspan of 169 feet, 10 inches (51.76 meters). The aircraft is powered by four fully reversible Pratt & Whitney F117-PW-100 engines (the commercial version is currently used on the Boeing 757). Each engine is rated at 40,440 pounds of thrust. The thrust reversers direct the flow of air upward and forward to avoid ingestion of dust and debris. Maximum use has been made of off-the-shelf and commercial equipment, including Air Force-standardized avionics.

The aircraft is operated by a crew of three (pilot, copilot and loadmaster), reducing manpower requirement risk exposure, and long-term operating costs. Cargo is loaded onto the C-17 through a large aft door that accommodates military vehicles and palletized





#### C-17 Globemaster III

cargo. The C-17 can carry virtually all of the Army's air-transportable equipment.

Maximum payload capacity of the C-17 is 170,900 pounds (77,519 kilograms), and its maximum gross takeoff weight is 585,000 pounds (265,352 kilograms). With a payload of 160,000 pounds (72,575 kilograms) and an initial cruise altitude of 28,000 feet (8,534 meters), the C-17 has an unrefueled range of approximately 2,400 nautical miles. Its cruise speed is approximately 450 knots (.74 Mach). The C-17 is designed to airdrop both equipment and 102 paratroopers.

The design of the aircraft lets it operate through small, austere airfields. The C-17 can take off and land on runways as short as 3,000 feet (914 meters) and as narrow as 90 feet (27.4 meters) wide. Even on such narrow runways, the C-17 can turn around using a three-point star turn and its backing capability.

#### Background

The C-17 made its maiden flight on Sept. 15, 1991, and the first production model was delivered to Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., on June 14, 1993. The 17th Airlift Squadron, the first squadron of C-17s, was declared operationally ready Jan. 17, 1995. The Air Force is programmed to receive a total of 120 C-17s by the year 2005. The bulk of the inventory will be at Charleston AFB and McChord AFB, Wash. C-17s will also be at Altus AFB, Okla. and an Air National Guard unit at Jackson, Miss.

The aircraft is operated by the Air Mobility Command with current operations at the 437th Airlift Wing and the 315th Airlift Wing (Air Force Reserve).

#### General Characteristics

**Primary Function:** Cargo and troop transport

**Prime Contractor:** Boeing Company

**Power Plant:** Four Pratt & Whitney F117-PW-100 turbofan engines

**Thrust:** 40,440 pounds, each engine

**Wingspan:** 169 feet 10 inches (to winglet tips) (51.76 meters)

**Length:** 174 feet (53 meters)

**Height:** 55 feet 1 inch (16.79 meters)

**Cargo Compartment:** length, 88 feet (26.82 meters); width, 18 feet (5.48 meters); height, 12 feet 4 inches (3.76 meters)

**Speed:** 450 knots at 28,000 feet (8,534 meters) (Mach .74)

**Service Ceiling:** 45,000 feet at cruising speed (13,716 meters)

**Range:** Global with in-flight refueling

**Crew:** Three (two pilots and one loadmaster)

**Maximum Peacetime Takeoff Weight:** 585,000 pounds (265,352 kilograms)

**Load:** 102 troops/paratroopers; 48 litter and 54 ambulatory patients and attendants; 170,900 pounds (77,519 kilograms) of cargo (18 pallet positions)

**Unit Cost:** \$180 million (FY96 constant dollars)

**Date Deployed:** June 1993

**Inventory:** unavailable

#### Point of Contact

Air Mobility Command, Public Affairs Office; 502 J Street; Scott AFB, Ill. 62225-5335; DSN 576-5003 or (618) 256-5003.







**Previously assigned wings at Charleston Air Force Base**

**456<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing  
15 Aug 1953-1 Mar 1955**



**1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Wing  
1 Mar 1955-27 Dec 1965**

